

**COUNTY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2001, 8:00 AM  
ROOM 564, COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

**Present:** Talmage S. Baggett, Chairman  
John Henley, Commissioner  
Billy R. King, Commissioner

**Others:** James Martin, County Manager  
Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager  
Amy H. Cannon, Assistant County Manager  
Cliff Spiller, Assistant County Manager  
Grainger Barrett, County Attorney  
Hank Debnam, Mental Health  
Tonya Harris-Council, Public Information Director  
James Lawson, Human Resources Manager  
James Silman, Safety/Risk Management Director  
Howard Smith, Information Services Director  
Diane Tolar, Mental Health  
Carol Trimmer, Mental Health  
Rhonda C. Raynor, Deputy Clerk to the Board  
Press

Chairman Baggett called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION:** Chairman Baggett offered the Invocation.

**1. Approval of Minutes of the October 11, 2001 meeting.**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Henley offered a motion to approve the October 11, 2001 meeting minutes.

**SECOND:** Commissioner King

**VOTE:** UNANIMOUS

**2. Report on Salaries of Various County Positions.**

Mr. Martin noted the committee had discussed salaries for department head level and above positions and had asked for additional information. He noted the information provided includes information from a number of counties that are similar to Cumberland County in population, per capita and tax valuations. Some of the counties listed are higher and some are lower. He noted it was Management's intent to provide this information as requested by the committee for informational purposes. Management has no recommendation at this point and will follow any direction from the committee.

Commissioner Henley questioned the number of counties with "no match" listed for certain positions. Should we be looking at these positions to see if other counties are handling the work in a more efficient manner?

James Lawson noted that department heads in other counties may perform several functions. There may not be enough work for one department head position so they would be assigned several responsibilities and the position would be under a different name.

Commissioner Henley noted that the Carpentry and Fleet Maintenance Supervisor positions were ones that did not have a match for several counties. He asked if these functions were privatized in the other counties. Could the county look at ways to streamline its services? He would like to have this matter researched to determine if any action is needed.

Mr. Lawson noted that a number of counties contract out for many services that Cumberland County provides in-house.

Chairman Baggett stated he would like to see the salaries for positions that are provided by a municipality in other counties.

Mr. Martin noted a follow-up would be done in the counties where there was no match and report back to the committee would be made.

3. Consideration of Approval of a Name Change for the Director of Sales (Grade 71) for the Coliseum.

Mr. Martin noted Rick Reno, CEO of the Coliseum Complex has asked that the Director of Sales position number 948, Grade 71 be changed to the Director of Ticketing. The grade for this position would remain a 71. There would be no salary change. The person in this position would manage the ticket sales process. The position would have significantly more financial responsibility. He noted Mr. Reno would be coming to the committee to ask for a position in sales. This position would be a sales manager and not a director of sales.

**MOTION:** Commissioner King offered a motion to approve the name change for the Director of Sales position number 948 at a grade 71 to the Director of Ticketing with the same position number and grade.

**SECOND:** Commissioner Henley

**VOTE:** UNANIMOUS

4. Consideration of a Recruitment and Retention Plan for Information Services.

**BACKGROUND:** On October 19, 1998, the Board of County Commissioners approved a recruitment and retention plan for mainframe computer personnel that established a hiring rate at the midpoint of the salary range for applicable position classifications. Additionally, the salaries of existing staff were also increased to include an adjustment for service time (schedule-E), on top of the new hiring rate.

Although we were able to fill two positions shortly after the implementation of this plan, there was no substantial increase in the number of candidates that applied for vacancies in the Information Services (IS) Department. Unfortunately, those two employees have since left County employment, and we have continued to face challenges with staffing in the IS department, including the impending retirement of one of our two remaining

Systems Analysts. In addition to turnover, IS has also suffered budget cuts that reduced the number of positions assigned to the department. In the FY00 budget, IS eliminated the funding for a Programmer Analyst position (\$40,024), and in FY02 eliminated two (2) other positions (Systems Analyst/Programmer Analyst, \$85,976). Consequently, IS has continued to have staffing concerns in their ability to maintain the County's systems and networks.

We have made great progress in advancing technology within and between County departments. Previously, departments outside the courthouse could only communicate with our mainframe computer through dial-up lines, which are not effective or efficient for transmitting data. We are in the process of completing our fiber optic link which will provide a connection to most county departments. In addition, we have recently implemented our new Human Resource/Payroll Software, and we are in the early stages of our new budget system conversion. With these recent achievements, we have been introduced to a new challenge in developing and maintaining these systems in addition to current systems. Sufficient staffing levels in the IS Department are critical to the continued support of the Tax Department, the Finance Department, (including payroll and budget), and the Personnel Department, as well as the remaining County departments. While these systems enhance many of our processes through automation and increased accessibility to more data, it also requires a significant amount of additional processing of programs and routines that have placed a heavier burden on the IS staff.

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

- We have previously experienced difficulties in our efforts to recruit candidates for our IS department, who have mainframe experience, and who are willing to come to Fayetteville, NC; we feel that we will continue to experience significant difficulties in attracting skilled candidates to apply for employment in Cumberland County.
- Salary surveys reveal that overall, the salaries of our IS staff are significantly below the market average. While this concern is not limited to our IS positions, it is important to note that these are critical positions that impact most, if not all, of our County operations, and therefore warrant immediate attention.
- In addition to addressing our ability to attract and hire candidates, we need to also find a way to retain our remaining (experienced) IS staff. Otherwise, we may find ourselves in a recruitment cycle, hiring employees only to lose them (and their experience) to an employer offering some additional reward to the employee.

- While salary is a factor in attracting candidates, other factors related to standard of living issues also play a major part in attracting candidates. Unfortunately, we are in competition with other employers in the industry who are in locations that better attract candidates who seek employment. Therefore, we still could face challenges in competing for skilled candidates, but hopefully we can offer salaries that will allow us to at least compete.
- Sufficient funds have been budgeted for this request. During the FY02 budget process, we knew that some consideration may be necessary in the recruitment and retention of IS personnel and also in addressing the loss of three systems related positions in a time when our systems have been expanded to offer greater flexibility and information, but, at the same time, have become much more complex. A budget revision is needed to move funding from General Government to Information Services.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Consider the following actions for submission to the Board of County Commissioners:

1. Approval of the proposed experience hiring plan. (Attached to and made a part of these minutes.)
2. Approval of a new System Analyst position, grade 70, at the proposed hiring rate of \$47,303 per annum.
3. Approval of a new Database Administrator position effective April, 2002, pending the outcome of a classification study.

\*The total cost for both actions is \$93,196 (including fringe benefits, but, excluding cost for new Database Administrator).

Mr. Martin noted the increase in responsibilities in the IS Department due to the implementation of new software and additional software that is to be implemented. Due to the staff and resource reductions over the last few years, Management felt the need to address these issues with the committee and to recommend action for their consideration.

Amy Cannon reviewed the background information and the Proposed Experience Hiring Plan. She noted funds were set aside in the FY02 budget to address this issue. The IS Department had their budget cut as did all other county departments.

James Lawson stated that it is hoped to increase recruitment and retention with the implementation of the Experience Hiring Plan. He noted the extreme difficulty experienced in getting applicants for IS positions. Salary adjustments are needed to help correct the situation. The County has surveyed the salaries at other locations and Cumberland County is significantly below the market rate. He noted the salaries of current staff have been addressed so that new employees won't come on board making more than those already on staff. He noted the plan adopted in 1998 which is now

being reviewed. He advised this issue will need to have continuous review because of the demand for these positions. The County must keep up with market demand.

Mrs. Cannon noted the City of Fayetteville and the PWC have a minimum starting salary that is significantly higher than the county.

Mr. Martin noted there is internal competition from a County department that receives state funding and has offered one of the IS employees approximately \$8,000 more than they are currently making.

Commissioner Henley noted the positions in IS are critical. He noted he is not prepared to support the approval of the new Database Administrator position without knowing the salary and the County's budget condition at the time it would be effective. He would like to consider that position when updated budget figures are available.

Mrs. Cannon noted Management would come back to the committee for approval at a later date for that position.

**MOTION: Commissioner Henley offered a motion to approve the following:**

1. **The proposed experience hiring plan.**
2. **Approval of a new System Analyst position, grade 70, at the proposed hiring rate of \$47,303 per annum.**

**SECOND: Chairman Baggett**  
**VOTE: UNANIMOUS**

5. **Nurses Pay Scale – 24-Hour In-Patient Facilities.**

**BACKGROUND:** Mental Health has been experiencing difficulties in retaining sufficient staff to provide nursing services on evening shifts. This shortage in staffing has placed a burden on existing day shift nurses to work extra hours in providing the needed coverage on evening/night shifts. Since the nursing staff is classified as exempt employees, they accrue compensatory time for each hour worked beyond their normal work schedule. They are not eligible to receive additional compensation for additional hours worked.

Due to the work demands, it is difficult to schedule time to allow the use of the comp time. The accrual of comp time offers no real incentive or benefit to these employees. This practice has led to morale problems and has contributed to an increased turnover of Mental Health nurses who accept other employment for more money and/or improved working conditions.

There has been some indication among nursing staff that payment of additional time worked would provide them with an incentive to work additional hours. Mental Health

management feels that pay consideration for overtime would also provide an incentive to improve our ability to retain nursing staff.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve a policy limited only to Mental Health nurses who provide services in the 24-hour Roxie Avenue Center that allows for the payment of overtime hours worked beyond the normally scheduled work week at the nurses' current hourly rate. Work schedules shall be managed to avoid overtime work as much as possible and all overtime work must receive prior approval by the appropriate managers/supervisors of the Roxie Avenue Center.

Commissioner Henley asked how many overtime hours would be paid to these nurses.

Diane Tolar advised the nurses are paid \$18.00 per hour and a maximum total for all nurses combined of 20 hours per week would be paid in overtime.

Mr. Martin noted there would be no increase in the budget to pay this overtime. The goal is to hire another nurse, but they want to be able to pay the nurses currently on staff for their overtime until the additional nurse can be hired.

Juanita Pilgrim noted the nurses are exempt employees due to their supervisory status and therefore are not required to receive time and one-half for hours worked over forty. They are paid on an hour-for-hour bases.

Diane Tolar noted this would only affect nurses working at the Roxie Avenue Center because it must be staffed 24 hours a day.

**MOTION:** Commissioner King offered a motion to approve a policy limited only to Mental Health nurses who provide services in the 24-hour Roxie Avenue Center that allows for the payment of overtime hours worked beyond the normally scheduled work week at the nurses' current hourly rate. Work schedules shall be managed to avoid overtime work as much as possible and all overtime work must receive prior approval by the appropriate managers/supervisors of the Roxie Avenue Center.

**SECOND:** Commissioner Henley

**VOTE:** UNANIMOUS

Amy Cannon asked that she give additional information with regard to the Network Administrator position discussed under Item 4. She noted the mainframe and network system has grown a great deal. The Legal Department has a network system. A network system is being developed for Community Development and there are several network systems in Tax Administration. Five years ago, all systems were on the mainframe. The system is now more complicated, but more can be done. The Network

Administrator is also in charge of the firewall. She felt it necessary to elaborate on the many responsibilities of this position.

Chairman Baggett noted he had another item for discussion that would require the committee to go into closed session.

**MOTION:** Chairman Baggett offered a motion to go into closed session to discuss a personnel matter.

**SECOND:** Commissioner Henley

**VOTE:** UNANIMOUS

**MOTION:** Commissioner King offered a motion to go into open session.

**SECOND:** Commissioner Henley

**VOTE:** UNANIMOUS

**MOTION:** Commissioner King offered a motion to adjourn.

**SECOND:** Commissioner Henley

**VOTE:** UNANIMOUS

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 AM.